

Sidelights On The War

The writer of these sidelights on the war has been living in Interlaken, Switzerland, where she has been in touch with various people who have given her interesting information. Her mother-in-law has been acting as a chauffeur in France, being engaged in securing the wounded, and from him she has learned incidents related here. (Elizabeth Desher Whiting in New York Sun.)

Many excuses were given to the German public for the retreat of the German army after the advance on Paris. It was termed a great piece of strategy. The German General von Cammerer once wrote in one of his works that "an offensive which has to retrace its steps before the gates of Paris or cannot even reach them, means a complete fiasco of the whole enterprise."

The new Krupp guns of 42 centimeters are known as the "busy Berthas," being so-called after Frau Krupp von Bohlen. It was a pity she could not have been a witness to the baptism of fire at Antwerp. All of the Krupp officials have received the Iron Cross.

An officer told a correspondent of the London Times that "every battle is won by the bayonet in the last issue. The British soldiers have put the doctrine of the machine gun to great shame. I have heard of charges impossible by the rules of the game which have wrested victory from the very teeth of defeat."

The following scene was described by an officer who took part in it:

"For long hours the soldiers have lain in sodden burrows exposed to terrible fire. Nerves are unstrung, tempers on edge. At last they are upon the enemy; they can now prove their valor with cold steel. At last it is man to man.

"Suddenly the sound of loud and continuous laughter is heard. One of the soldiers has passed the border of restraint. He is transformed, a very figure of destruction; it is no longer dull courage, but a blaze of fury that sweeps the ranks of the enemy like a fire.

"Machine guns have no reply to such zeal of passion; no machine conceived could oppose this living flood of wrath. The sound of that terrible laughter will ring in my ears as long as I live."

The French supplies for the soldiers in the fields are abundant. Convoys of provisions, both of food and ammunition, pass up and down the lines with perfect regularity. One soldier remarked that he was being overfed; he never had the good luck before to have more than enough of chicken and rabbit.

The troops also are so well provided with tobacco that they can afford to give some to the civil population in towns where the Germans had cleaned out the tobacconist shops.

The German Ambassador in Rome has denied the accusation against the German Crown Prince of having pillaged the chateau of Baroness de Baye. The latest development is given in a letter from the Baroness. She writes that she had received from a witness of the theft a letter saying that the Crown Prince sent for a locksmith and at the muzzle of a revolver the locksmith was forced to open doors of closets and to pack up the proceeds of the theft. Then under an escort he was forced to take the cases into Bethel.

A typewritten journal called the North Sea Mines is published on the battleship King Edward VII. There is a page of wit and wisdom written by the "Duty Clown." The following is commended:

"Wisdom is merely what other people don't know and we do."

I give some impressions gathered by a motorcyclist who has been in front of the army and continually under fire:

"When they are in the trenches with shells bursting all around, men become mere machines. They get absolutely dehumanized under continuous fire. It is the only alternative to going mad! One has no consciousness of danger, but obeys orders without realizing what they mean. One forgets what death is.

"When first I had to carry a despatch under fire I used to dismount when I saw a shell burst on the road ahead and wait to see if more were coming. Now I don't notice them. My comrade riding twenty yards behind me was killed by a shell, but the incident had no effect on my mind. We are no better than brutes on the firing line."

The following is an extract from a private letter written by an officer to his mother:

"A padre turned up yesterday and at night—it was not safe to begin earlier—we held a service at which a great many of our men attended and afterward there was a large attendance at Holy Communion. A strange sight.

"It was in a woods; in black darkness save for two candles burning on

a packing case which served as an altar; the chalice was a tin mug. The soldiers, grimed with battle, each with his rifle, knelt in a circle round the light.

"There must have been just such scenes in early Christian days."

Another story an officer tells of a German prisoner very dejected amid his guard:

"Damn the Kaiser!" he cried. "I wish I was back in Sheffield," and this was spoken in very good English!

One English soldier badly wounded was found dying alongside a wounded German who was shot in both arms. A cigarette was in the German's mouth and the English soldier was holding it while his enemy smoked it.

It seems that the third volume of Bismarck's memoirs, the publication of which was to be made later, was at the special request of Bismarck himself deposited in the Bank of England. We can assume that this treasure will remain secure in the bank's safe.

No doubt the German Chancellor had in his mind when speaking of a "scrap of paper" the speech of Frederick William from the throne to the First Parliament of Prussia in 1847. Having handed over the patent of the Constitution he said:

"Never will I allow a sheet of writing paper to come, like a second Providence, between our Lord God in heaven and this land, to govern us by its paragraphs."

Napoleon once said: "God is always on the side of the last reserve."

The Sikhs and Gurkhas are the best of fighting men. The former have the title of "lion race" from their defence of the weak and oppressed. Their value as soldiers depends upon their adherence to the simple life and tenets of their fathers. One leader of the sect would not allow them to cut their hair so that they might look like giants and so frighten their enemies on the field of battle!

The Gurkhas' religion is a Hinduism of the simplest kind; more like Buddhism. It is interesting to go to the camp and see the repast of the Hindu. The Gurkha and other Hindus will eat goat and mutton provided the animal has been killed in a special manner, but the disgust which the strict Hindu feels at physical contact with beef is so intense he cannot look at it. No beef is killed at the front as it might carry pollution to the Hindus. For drink the army rations of the Indian troops includes rum, but the Mohammedan being debarred by the Prophet from all intoxicating liquors is given sugar and tea instead. The Indian soldier receives two packets of cigarettes a week.

In Bombay, when a regiment of Gurkhas was embarking, the question arose among the British officers as to whether they would eat meat. They decided to put the case to the mn. The Subadar (chief native officer) was called and after a winking of the eyebrow said: "I think, Sahib, the regiment will be willing to eat the iced sheep provided one of them is always present to see the animal frozen to death."

That the men may know whether they are eating clean or unclean flesh units are detached to a point near the railroad, where each man, be he Mohammedan, Sikh or Hindu, despatches his beast by his own peculiar sacrificial stroke, marks it as clean and sends it on to his comrades in the trenches.

Their camps are huge stocks of hay and Indian chopped straw, covered over with green tarpaulin, and that same chopped straw is given to their mules and country bred horses. The latter will not eat the English hay.

The gayety of the French soldiers waiting in the trenches is well illustrated by a daily newspaper which is being produced by a certain colonial regiment fighting in the Argonne. The newspaper, which is called Le Petit Colonial, is lithographed on a sheet of ordinary note paper. It contains the communiqués of the day and amusing topics of the war. One little sketch shows a French colonial infantryman introducing a "Cippaye" (Sepoy) to a Senegalese with the words, "Sepoy allow me to introduce a son of Buddha to a son of Mahomet. We don't know one another, but we are all brothers."

Another item, under the heading of "Situations Vacant," is an offer made to all soldiers who have acted as waiters, ushers in courts, etc., of the job of announcing the arrival of the German shells in our lines. "A strong voice is indispensable," it adds.

The clock tower of the Hotel de Ville at Arras, that was destroyed by German fire, was the pride of Arras. It was begun in 1463, was 244 feet in height and was surmounted by a ducal crown, which in turn was topped by an enormous lion bearing a pennon acting as a wind vane.

In the tower was a famous old clock of 1776 with a chime of ancient bells. They were known as "A Peffroy," "Le Couvre-feu," "Le Guet" and Joyeuse, which on account of its great weight,

3,000 kilos, was struck by a hammer.

A French officer who was badly wounded and made prisoner was taken before the Crown Prince of Germany. In a letter he wrote to his home, he said he was most favorably impressed by the Prince. He is slender and very refined in bearing and speaks French like an educated Frenchman without the slightest accent. He wore a helmet over which was a cover and he had not the slightest badge or stripe which would betray his rank.

This was the last entry made in a German officer's diary before he was killed:

"For several days we have not tasted a hot meal. The reserve rations are exhausted. The water bad and green. Man is reduced to the level of a beast."

During the war French soldiers are paid 50 centimes (12 cents) a day; in time of peace 25 centimes (5 cents) per day! But, the government aids their families.

The man who planned the flooding of the German position on the Yser in Belgium has been decorated with the order of King Leopold. He was the keeper of the great slices of Neuport, which control the water in the canal and dykes. He pointed out to the Belgian staff that by using the railway embankment as a dyke, and by breaking the canal in certain places most of the region in which the German trenches and advanced gun positions lay would be covered with water. His plan was at once adopted.

The Germans boasted to some prisoners, one of whom escaped, that they had recaptured the town of Dixmude because the Allies were "too soft for life in the trenches." Some of the trenches even in the scenes of the shifting battles are as luxurious as houses. Sheltered passages lead to back premises; on one side is the storehouse and kitchen, on the other the offices. The drainage and sanitation would pass the test of the British factory acts. One of the Tommies said that if you had "cavars" cigarettes and socks the trenches weren't bad."

A story that I have from the front and can vouch for is that a major of French infantry found in the ranks an elderly man whom he had known in private life and who lived near Peronne. The man asked to be assigned for service where he could be in charge of German prisoners and the major granted his request, for he was sorry for him, owing to a terrible grief which the man had related to him.

The first day that the man found himself in the presence of five German prisoners, lying wounded on their stretchers in the Gare du Nord, he took out a five chambered revolver and shot every one of them. It seems that his daughter had been mutilated and worse than murdered before his very eyes while he was bound hand and foot and placed where he should be a witness of the scene.

NORTH CAROLINIANS IN THE METROPOLIS

By R. S. CARRAWAY.

New York, Jan. 2.—A letter of appeal from Ganka Habicht to her father for his return to care for herself and her younger sisters and brother after their mother died on Tuesday, brought the father back to their home in this city, and a reunion of father and children took place, while friends of the family called to pay their last respects to the mother.

When the father went away some years ago he left his family—his oldest daughter, eight years old, and the youngest, Joseph, a baby—in fairly well circumstances. He and his wife had established a chain of cleaning and dyeing stores, and from their earnings had invested in real estate, much of the property being situated in the outlying districts of New York. All of this is gone, and the father returned to find his children in all but destitute circumstances and to learn of the suffering of the wife in the last few years from cancer. She died at night in the store. Up to the last she had worked to earn enough to feed her children, refusing to give up enough time to go to the hospital for an operation. Toward the last she was so weakened that she could not climb the two flights of stairs to her home over the store, so had fitted up a bed in the rear of the store and from there carried on the business with the aid of a hired girl and her children. Besides Ganka and Joseph, now sixteen and eight years old, respectively, they are Kate, aged 14, and Sarah, 12. The father learned from the daughter the property has been mortgaged and foreclosures ordered. The stores, with the exception of the one they conducted on Lenox avenue, have all been closed, and there is little, if anything, left.

Soon after the father left he went to Charlotte, N. C. It was there that the letter reached him from his daughter, and he intends to take his children to his home in that city. After locating in Charlotte, the father established a steam laundry and has been quite successful. Thus a family tragedy reunites father and his children.

The Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the Children of the Confederacy, Mrs.

Robins A. Lau, president-general, gave its usual Christmas dance Wednesday evening at the Hotel Bretton Hall for the benefit of the educational fund with which the chapter maintains a school in the North Carolina mountains for children of poor mountaineers. The patronesses included several well-known former North Carolina women among whom were Mrs. Simon Baruch, Mrs. Hartwell B. Grubbs, Mrs. George Owens, Mrs. Don Richardson, and the Misses Helen and Ruth Steele.

Mr. J. D. McNeil, Mayor of Fayetteville and a prominent warehouse merchant, is spending a few days in New York, attending to business and enjoying the sights in his spare hours. His young grandson is with him. Mayor McNeil is a third-third degree optimist in regard to conditions in North Carolina and predicts that the new year will be a bountiful one.

Professors T. S. Graves and A. E. Moore of Trinity College, Durham, passed the present week in Gotham, coming on particularly to attend the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association at Columbia University, but also managing to devote part of the time in enjoying the sights of the metropolis. Professor Graves said that Trinity College is in an excellent condition and that it is experiencing a highly successful year.

The Rev. and Mrs. George Grenville Merrill, of St. Paul's rectory, Stockbridge, Mass., have as their guests over the holidays Mrs. George W. Vanderbilt and Miss Cornelia Vanderbilt. Mrs. Vanderbilt and her daughter will pass some time in New York before returning to Biltmore House.

Mr. E. P. Childs, of Asheville, president of the Mountain School for Boys, which was totally destroyed by fire last week, is in New York conferring with members of the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian church, under whose auspices the institution was conducted, as to whether the school would be rebuilt. Mr. Childs stated today that no decision had yet been reached.

Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Allen, Jr., of Wake Forest, have been passing the last few days in the metropolis, staying at the Navarre.

Miss M. L. Oldham, of Carlenton, was a guest during the present week at the Martha Washington Hotel.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Walter Jones, of Charlotte, have been spending the past few days in New York on a pleasure visit.

Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Bell, of Durham, are among the North Carolinians visiting in the metropolis, stopping at the McAlpin.

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Allen, of Louisville, reached New York during the Miss Julia Raines, of Greensboro, has been passing several days at the McAlpin Hotel.

New Year's week brought quite a few Tar Heels to New York on various errands. Among those registered at the principal hostels were:

Aberdeen.—W. D. Wetherbee, Charlotte; F. S. Wombull, Asheville, and F. L. Faulconer, Greensboro.
Wallack.—Dr. J. W. Tankersly, and F. E. Harlee, Greensboro.
Grand.—D. Rights, Winston-Salem; M. B. Neyalt, Goldsboro, and J. W. Walton, Statesville.
Strand.—R. P. Owens, Raleigh.
Arlington.—F. D. Burns, Thomas-ton.
Latham.—E. W. Jordan, Charlotte.
McAlpin.—H. A. Wilde, Asheville; J. L. Hartsell, Concord, and J. W. Fraser, Charlotte.
Flanders.—J. P. Brawely, Raleigh.
Imperial.—J. A. Mills, Raleigh.
Park Avenue.—G. S. Weston, Wilson.
Marlborough.—H. Goodowitz, Rocky Mount.

LIKE TWAIN'S UNFORTUNATE.

Constable Encounters Sea of Troubles, But Eventually Repevins Heifer. (Bangor, Me., Dispatch to the New York World.)

When a constable has extra trouble serving a writ of replevin on a heifer he must be allowed extra costs, under a decision of Judge Blanchard in the local court. Constable Skeffington Kelso, of Eddington, told the court these things happened when he went out to replevin a heifer in connection with a civil suit:

Animal led him a chase through four miles of swamp.
Heifer circulated a mountain.
Vicious dog held up capture of heifer for two hours.
Kelso broke through ice twice.
Stepped into a milk trap.
Lost his jackknife.
Tore his clothing and ruined his shoes.

Also he was held up to derision by a young woman, who wrote a funny poem about his chase and read it at a grange meeting.

Rockstead, the famous racehorse of a decade ago, which died recently in Paris, was insured for the sum of \$150,000. After his retirement he was sold to American breeders for \$125,000. Six years later he was bought by a French syndicate for about the same figure. In view of his winnings, purchase prices and fees he has been called the million-dollar equine.